



## St Nicholas C of E Primary School



# EYFS (Reception) Policy

# EYFS at St Nicholas C of E Primary School

## Introduction

In our EYFS at St Nicholas, we place great value on the development of children as individuals and providing them with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to prepare them for not only the challenges in Key Stage One but beyond. We believe that all children deserve an education rich in language, awe & wonder and memorable experiences that allows children's natural creativity and curiosity to flourish, alongside the purposeful acquisition of skills and knowledge.

## Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Vision

Our EYFS vision is based on the Early Years Framework and 4 overarching principles of the framework that shape our practice, as shown below:

**Unique Child** – Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

**Positive Relationships** – Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

**Enabling Environments** – Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.

**Learning and Development** – Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early year's provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Woven throughout our EYFS is our school vision to *“Aim high, be courageous and show love,”* underpinned by our Christian values.

It is our EYFS vision that:

- **Our children** are inspired and feel included, enabling them to flourish.
- **Our children** are motivated, enthusiastic, resilient, independent, and curious learners who question, explore, solve problems, articulate their thinking, and are well prepared for the next stage in their individual learning journeys.
- **Our enabling environments** are welcoming, visually engaging, well-resourced, appropriately enhanced, and meticulously planned. They offer experiences that are rich, varied, imaginative, and highly challenging, while being appropriate to the needs of all children.
- **We deliver** a sequential and progressive curriculum which clearly outlines the knowledge and skills that children will learn and build upon as they progress through the Foundation Stage. By the end of their Early Years journey, our children will be ready to transition confidently into Year 1 and continue their lifelong learning journey.
- **Our staff** have in-depth, up-to-date knowledge of all areas of learning within the EYFS Framework, pedagogy, and child development, as well as a deep understanding of the individual needs of each child and the cohort as a whole. They understand and implement quality-first teaching and hold high expectations for what children can achieve. They use this knowledge to drive learning, close gaps, and accelerate progress.

## Structure & staffing

The Early Years Foundation Stage at St Nicholas consists of two Reception classes, each with up to 30 children. Each Reception class is staffed by a qualified class teacher and a teaching assistant, with additional adults deployed where required to support children with additional needs and interventions. All staff in Reception develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

### Why do we teach what we teach?

Our aim is to build strong foundations rooted in both academic success and moral and spiritual development, so that our pupils grow into happy, confident learners who make the most of their abilities and talents as they progress through life.

We have the highest aspirations for every child, believing that they should be empowered to take ownership of their learning and their environment. Our staff invest time in creating a positive learning environment in which children develop a lifelong love of learning. We aim to provide and maintain a safe, attractive, stimulating, and reassuring environment that offers a secure platform from which all children can develop physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually.

Our learning environments are welcoming, visually engaging, well-resourced, appropriately enhanced, and meticulously planned. They offer experiences that are rich, varied, imaginative, and highly challenging, yet always appropriate to the needs of the children.

Adults in our provision explicitly support the development of children's self-regulation, working memory, flexible thinking and attention through high-quality interactions, routines and carefully planned learning experiences.

Adults use questioning, modelling and sustained shared thinking to extend children's language, deepen their understanding and promote critical thinking.

When children transition into our Reception class, they and their families are welcomed into a positive, nurturing, and safe environment where everyone is valued and supported — becoming part of the St Nicholas family. We work in close partnership with parents and their pre-school settings to ensure that each child has the best possible start to their educational journey with us and beyond.

While the majority of our children transition from local nurseries, we recognise that every child is unique and joins us with different experiences, levels of development, and cultural capital. It is our intent to take into account each child's starting point and individual needs as they begin their learning journey at St Nicholas.

With this in mind, we provide a sequential and progressive curriculum that clearly outlines the knowledge and skills children will learn and build upon as they move through the Foundation Stage. Every child has access to a broad and balanced curriculum that prepares them not only for the present but also for the future, providing rich opportunities and meaningful experiences.

Our EYFS curriculum aims to enable our children to be:

- **Competent and creative learners** who are curious about the world around them.
- **Secure and confident individuals** who enjoy coming to school and learning new skills and knowledge, building on what they already know.
- **Skilful communicators** who connect with others through language and play, flourishing in a vocabulary-rich environment.

## How do we teach what we teach?

At St Nicholas, we follow the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework, which sets out the seven areas of learning and development. The three prime areas—Communication and Language, Physical Development, and Personal, Social and Emotional Development—form the foundation for children’s learning. The specific areas—Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, and Expressive Arts and Design—build upon these to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum.

Our curriculum and progressive milestones are underpinned by the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning:

- **Playing and Exploring** – enabling children to investigate, experience, and “have a go.”
- **Active Learning** – encouraging persistence, concentration, and enjoyment in achievement.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – supporting children to develop ideas, make connections, and solve problems.

Through carefully structured play, exploration, and adult guidance, children develop curiosity, confidence, and independence in a language-rich environment. Our well-planned and engaging provision allows children to learn through meaningful experiences that build the knowledge and skills they need for Key Stage 1 and beyond.

### Our Curriculum –

Our bespoke EYFS curriculum builds strong foundations in both knowledge and skills. It is sequential, progressive, and designed to meet children’s individual starting points, ensuring every child can achieve their potential.

- **Phonics & Reading:** We follow the *Essential Letters and Sounds* scheme, with daily sessions, ongoing assessment, and targeted support for those who need it.
- **Mathematics:** Daily teaching follows the *Mastering Number* programme, supporting early number fluency and understanding.
- **Literacy:** Literacy is taught through the *Literacy Tree* book-based approach, which provides purposeful and engaging writing opportunities.
- **Handwriting:** Developed progressively through fine and gross motor activities, linked to the *Essential Letters and Sounds* handwriting progression.
- **Discovery Curriculum:** Our bespoke *Discovery Curriculum* supports *Understanding the World* and *Communication & Language* through high-quality texts that inspire awe, wonder, and curiosity.

Across all areas, we create an enabling environment that promotes active learning, independence, and collaboration. Our staff model language, scaffold learning, and provide challenge to ensure every child becomes a confident, motivated learner who loves to explore and discover.

## How do we know what our children have learnt?

Our EYFS curriculum meets the needs of all our children, including those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND. We continually evaluate how children are learning through high-quality interactions, careful observation, and ongoing assessment. Staff monitor learning through children’s work, their play and engagement, and regular analysis of progress data.

Children are assessed in all areas of learning and development at the start of the year and subsequently at the end of each term using our rigorous assessment processes. This information is

recorded and used to establish children's starting points, monitor progress and evaluate attainment against the Early Learning Goals and, where appropriate, national outcomes. Evidence of children's learning is compiled in learning journey displays, floor books, and assessment books.

### **Assessment –**

On entry to Reception, teachers complete the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA), a statutory requirement for all schools in the UK. This assessment must be completed within the first six weeks of a child starting school and provides the starting point for measuring pupil progress from Reception to Year 6.

In addition to this, our teaching team will complete our own bespoke baseline assessment in the prime areas of the EYFS Framework and use the information to identify areas of focus for the cohort and more specifically for individuals to ensure they make good progress.

At the end of the Foundation Stage, children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP). This statutory, summative assessment reflects practitioners' professional judgements based on their knowledge of each child's learning and development across the seven areas. The main purpose of the EYFSP is to support a smooth transition to Key Stage 1. The assessment outcomes are shared and discussed with Year 1 staff to inform planning and ensure continuity of learning. Parents also receive a written summary of their child's attainment and progress in the end-of-year report in July.

Ongoing, informal assessment takes place daily through observations, conversations, and interactions, informing teaching and planning in real time.

### **SEND & Inclusion -**

The Early Years Foundation Stage follows the school's SEND Code of Practice. A child has special educational needs if they require additional support to access the curriculum. At St Nicholas C of E Primary School, we make reasonable adjustments to ensure inclusion and equal opportunities for all.

We recognise that children learn in different ways and at different rates. Our planning considers each child's development, interests, and learning style, ensuring that diversity is celebrated and all children are supported to achieve their personal best. Children are encouraged to make choices within clear boundaries, helping them become confident, independent learners who can assess risks and stay safe.

Where a child has a SEND, staff consider whether specialist support is needed, collaborating with parents and external agencies as appropriate. We believe that early identification and intervention are essential for children showing developmental delays, behavioural challenges, or difficulties settling into the provision.

In the Foundation Stage, we ensure that children can achieve the Early Learning Goals through:

- Planning experiences that build on children's knowledge, interests, and confidence
- Using a range of teaching strategies to meet diverse learning needs
- Providing motivating, inclusive, and effective learning opportunities
- Creating a safe and supportive environment where every child's contribution is valued
- Using resources that reflect diversity and avoid discrimination or stereotyping
- Monitoring progress and providing targeted support, including referrals to external agencies where needed

- Collaborating closely with parents, carers, and other professionals to meet each child's needs

### Transition Process -

Starting school can be a challenging time for young children. At St Nicholas C of E Primary School, we carefully support transition both to and from Reception, ensuring each child and their family settles quickly and happily.

#### Visits to Pre-school Settings -

The EYFS Lead and the SENDCO contact and meet with pre-school settings to discuss children moving up to St Nicholas. They will also, where needed, visit children in their settings to understand their development and experiences. We also ask all settings to complete transition forms to help support a smooth transition.

#### New to Reception Parent Drop-in Evening -

Parents of children starting in Reception are invited to a drop-in event in the Summer term. They meet the teaching team in reception and key staff, receive packs with various information such as our Reception Guide, key dates, All about Me booklet for children/parents to complete, staggered start information and invitations to transition events such as our BookNic. The Safeguarding Leads and the SENDCo are available to discuss any concerns and plan support before September. The PTA are also there selling 2<sup>nd</sup> hand uniform and our school caterers showcase samples of the school dinner menu.

#### Stay and Play – Transition Day -

In July, children visit their new learning environment and meet reception team during a Stay and Play session. They explore indoor and outdoor areas, try some activities, and meet peers. This familiarises them with the Reception environment before starting full-time.

#### Staggered September Start -

To support adjustment in September:

- Children attend reduced hours sessions initially, gradually building up to full mornings/afternoons and a lunch session.
- Full-time attendance begins once children are ready and usually children start after the first week of term, unless a slower induction is agreed for individual needs.

#### New Reception Parent Events -

During the Autumn Term, we offer a range of events to support parents as they become part of our school community and to provide information about key aspects of school life. Parents are invited to attend information sessions on phonics, Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, and the importance of good attendance. We also host coffee mornings throughout the term, providing opportunities for new Reception families to meet one another, build relationships and become familiar with the school community.

## Safeguarding & Welfare -

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe, and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.” (EYFS Statutory Framework 2025)

At St Nicholas C of E Primary School, we adhere to all EYFS welfare requirements, ensuring that we:

- Safeguard children and ensure adults are suitable to work with them
- Promote good health and safety
- Support positive behaviour
- Maintain clear records, policies, and procedures

**Safeguarding Children** - We take child protection seriously. Any concerns are recorded via CPOMS, reported to the safeguarding team, and acted upon appropriately. Children’s safety is our priority. All staff receive regular safeguarding training, and the full Safeguarding Policy is available for parents.

**Keeping Safe** - Children are taught boundaries, rules, and safe risk-taking. We encourage independence, understanding of hazards, and respect for themselves and others.

**Health & Nutrition** - Children are provided with a healthy daily snack and access to water throughout the day. EYFS meals, snacks, and drinks follow DfE nutrition guidance, are balanced and nutritious, and are prepared safely, with attention to allergies and choking risks. Staff are trained in paediatric first aid and safe eating practices.

**Attendance** - Attendance is closely monitored. Absences are followed up promptly in line with EYFS guidance to ensure children’s safety and our own Attendance Policy and practices.

**Supported & Intimate Care** - Some children may need support with toileting, dressing, or other personal care. Staff:

- Follow safeguarding procedures and safer recruitment policies
- Obtain written parental consent for intimate care
- Encourage children to participate as much as possible
- Maintain privacy, dignity, and professional practice
- Follow hygiene and safety protocols (gloves, handwashing, clean facilities)
- All care is recorded and communicated to parents.

**Health & Safety** - We maintain a safe environment with secure access, first aid provision, safe equipment, and medicines stored securely with appropriate parental consent. Children are taught to move safely and use equipment responsibly.

**Equal Opportunities** - All EYFS provision is accessible to every child, regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnicity, or background. Diversity is respected and celebrated.

### Links with Other School Policies -

EYFS closely follows all relevant whole school policies including:

Equal Opportunities

Health & Safety

Admissions

Special Education Needs

Behaviour & Relationships

Safeguarding & Child Protection

Staff Conduct

Attendance